

Politics and Digital Humanities

DHUM 78000

Spring 2024

Shawna M. Brandle

shawna.brandle@gmail.com

Course Site: <https://poldighum.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>

Course Zotero Library: <https://www.zotero.org/groups/5375540/poldighum>

Synchronous Meetings: Monday 6:30-8:30 pm

Student Hours: Monday 8:30-9:30pm & by appointment

Introduction

Welcome to Politics and Digital Humanities! In this class, we will explore how politics has been examined through a digital humanities lens as well as how digital humanities can be explored through a political lens. We will explore political researchers' use of digital humanities tools, as well as digital humanists' work on political topics. Throughout the course, we will seek to uncover and interrogate the (un)stated politics underlying works in digital humanities.

We will begin by attempting to define the parameters of the course: What is/are digital humanities? What is/are politics? Then we will look through the lens of identity politics: race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and Indigenous and decolonial politics. In the second half of the course, we'll dig into individual topics from both US and international politics. As there is so much that could be covered, we'll have two class topics decided by the class. Since we can't possibly cover it all, students are encouraged to use their coursework (blogging, review, final project) to draw connections to politics and/or digital humanities which are most interesting to them.

Our weekly course meetings will be collaboratively run and students will be expected to actively participate in each session. The course will incorporate open educational practices to maximize student learning and autonomy. Coursework will consist of engaging with and blogging about the selected materials each week prior to class, leading one course meeting and participating in all others, writing a scholarly project review, and a culminating work. Students will choose their own culminating work for the course, which may be research paper or practice/project-based in nature.

This class is happening during the Spring 2024 semester, while COVID-19 still(!) rages on, affecting the physical, mental, emotional, and financial well-being of so many. This course's approach using modified self-grading, working both synchronously and asynchronously, and using flexible deadlines is meant to build in space for that reality. But if at any point that is not enough space for your reality, please let me know and we'll figure it out. (I won't need to know your reason or details, just how I can help adjust the class best for your learning).

A little about me

I am a Professor of Political Science at Kingsborough Community College in the City University of New York; I am also on the faculty of the Digital Humanities Program at the CUNY Graduate

Center and a proud GC alum. In Fall, 2021, I was a Fulbright Scholar at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. If you're curious, you can find a lot more about me on [my website](#).

Course Schedule

This is the schedule of topics we will cover this semester. The readings (as PDFs and as links to consult) are organized by week in the class [Zotero Library](#). You may subscribe to our class calendar by clicking [here](#). The schedule of topics is:

Week	Zoom	Topic	Notes
Week 1	29-Jan	Introductions	
Week 2	5-Feb	What is/are Digital Humanities? What is/are Politics?	
	12-Feb	GC Closed	
	19-Feb	GC Closed	
Week 3	22 Feb	Race, Ethnicity, and Politics	It's Thursday but GC is on Monday Schedule!
Week 4	26 Feb	DHP Project Reviews- Lightning Talks	Post review by 2-25, Present on 2-26
Week 4	28 Feb	Gender & Sexuality Politics	It's Wednesday but is GC on Monday Schedule!
Week 5	4 Mar	Indigenous & Decolonial Politics	
Week 6	11 Mar	US Politics	Write a midterm self-evaluation post
Week 7	18 Mar	Conflict, Atrocities, and What Comes After	
Week 8	25 Mar	Politics and People in Motion	
Week 9	1 Apr	Human Rights	
Week 10	8 Apr	Topic TBD by Class	
Week 11	15 Apr	No Class this week- schedule individual meeting to discuss final project instead.	
	22 Apr	No Class- Spring Break!	
Week 12	29 Apr	No Class Monday- Spring Break! For the rest of the week, read and blog for the next class and work on your final project	
Week 13	6 May	Topic TBD by Class	
Week 14	13 May	Final Class: Show & Share Final Projects	
	20 May	Final date to submit all work	Final Due Date for final blog post and all outstanding work

Coursework

The work for this course will happen largely asynchronously in your reading, thinking, and writing, with two synchronous hours each week (Monday 6:30-8:30 pm) for discussing and working together. Reading and blogging should be done prior to our Monday meeting (this effectively means trying to treat our synchronous meeting as the end of our week, not the beginning). Coursework will fall into 6 categories:

1. DHP Review & Lightning Talk (10 Points)- February 26

Assignment details are [here](#).

2. Final Project (30 Points)

To be discussed in the first class, and refined in April. Preliminary guidelines are [here](#).

3. Blogging (25 Points)

All students will blog each week, either on their own site which will be linked to our class site, or on our class site.¹ Your blog post each week should help you make sense of the assigned materials- you do not need to summarize, but you should reflect, raise questions, and/or draw connections to other topics in the course, your colleagues' posts, and/or your own work/experience. Please complete your weekly blog post as early as possible during the week, and no later than Sunday night at the very latest, so we all have time to read and respond before class. This class uses flexible due dates, so being a little late sometimes is not a problem, but if you find yourself falling more than 1 week behind, please email me to let me know how you plan to catch up.²

4. Class Participation (20 Points)

Because this is an online class, in a (still! ongoing!) pandemic we'll be using a variety of means to participate in this class. Asynchronously, we'll all read the assigned works, write blog posts, and comment/reply on each others' posts.³ Synchronously, we'll meet each week on Mondays from 6:30-8:30pm on Zoom to discuss the readings together.

At the end of the semester, you will grade yourself for how effectively you participated in class. Did you contribute each week (asynchronously, synchronously, or both), in substantive ways, that improved the discussion in the class, advancing your own understanding and that of the group? Please note: Zoom class participation requires active, engaged participation, but does not require having one's camera on (though cameras are encouraged if you feel comfortable).

¹ Students who have privacy or other concerns about blogging may email me to arrange blogging on Blackboard.

² I am available to help you strategize catching up if you like

³ Please try to read and respond to as many of your colleagues' posts as possible each week. You are only required to respond to all posts during your facilitation week, but you (and your colleagues) will benefit from the more reading and replying you are able to do throughout the course.

Participation does, however, require focus and the minimization of distractions.⁴ Active participation may look different for each of us, so please do your best. Let us work together to explore what participatory learning can look like.

5. Class Facilitator (10 Points)

Each week, we'll have one class member act as **facilitator**. The facilitator is responsible for:

1. Choosing and sharing a piece to add to the required reading/viewing for that week.
Please circulate it as soon as you can (by Thursday before your class at the very latest) so everyone has time to engage with it.
2. In the interest of managing workload, the facilitator has the discretion to mark one listed item from the existing schedule as "optional" for their week
3. The facilitator will take the lead on facilitating asynchronous discussion throughout the week leading up to their class, **commenting and replying on all of the blogs** for that week.
4. Taking the lead for discussion of the topic in our zoom class session, including **planning and executing an interactive element**. Facilitator is not responsible for filling the entire class period- between 20 and 50 minutes is the target
5. Please sign up to be a facilitator [here](#).

6. Class Notetaker (5 Points)

Each student will serve one week as the lead note-taker on our collaborative note-taking document, which will serve as our record of the synchronous meeting. The notes do not have to be verbatim, but should convey the main ideas that we cover in the session, so it can be useful to anyone who has to miss a synchronous session as well as for all of us to have a record. All class members will be encouraged to add to the [collaborative notes](#), but the lead note-taker will be responsible for making sure we have at least a good outline of what went on. I will add a brief agenda to the notes each week before class. Please sign up to be a note-taker [here](#).

Grading

This course will use self-grading/modified un-grading. All work has baseline requirements (explained above), and students must submit a short (3-4 sentences) self-grading assessment for each assignment, assigning themselves a number of points that they feel their work has earned, along with an explanation of how their work meets the requirements of the assignment. Lightning Talk and Review self-assessment is due with the project on **February 26**, class facilitation self-assessment can be written as a blog post after completion of the class, and self-assessment (and assigning points) for blogging, class participation, and final project will be submitted in the final wrap-up blog post at the end of the semester.

⁴ This means that you should plan to be in a space where you can concentrate on the class from 6:30-8:30pm on all class nights- not in the middle of commuting. We are all adults, and I realize that things (both good and bad) may interfere with this ideal occasionally; on those occasions, of course, I will support you in choosing what is best for your life and your learning. For example, if you are ill, while you could technically "attend" class without endangering anyone else, if your time would be better spent resting so you recover sooner, please do that! Finally, please do not call into the class while you are driving- it is unsafe, ineffective for your learning, and I don't want to be an accessory to distracted driving!

Blogging: 25 points
Class Participation: 20 points
Class Facilitation: 10 points
Review and Lightning Talk: 15 points
Final Project: 30 points

To earn credit for the class, you must earn points from every category. Letter grade will be determined by the number of points you earn- 70-79 is a C, 80-89 is a B, and 90-100 is an A.

Course Policies

Guiding Principles

I quote Dr. Andie Siva's Digital Pedagogy 1 syllabus: "Playfulness, joy, and constructive criticism are welcome. Hatred, abuse, or discrimination are not. . . Slurs and racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, and/or ableist language will not be welcome in this space."

Accessibility

CUNY is required to provide appropriate accommodations for all students with disabilities. Please see the [Student Disability Services website](#) for the full policy and information on how to obtain accommodations. I have designed this course using [UDL principles](#) in the hopes that the course can work well for a wide variety of students, but if there is any way I can make the course more accessible for you (whether you have officially recognized accommodations or not) please email me.

Anti-discrimination statement

CUNY's Policy on Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination applicable to all colleges and units is—to recruit, employ, retain, promote, and provide benefits to employees and to admit and provide services for students without discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, partnership status, disability, genetic information, alienage, citizenship, military or veteran status, pregnancy, status as a victim of domestic violence/stalking/sex offenses, unemployment status, caregiver or familial status, prior record of arrest or conviction, or any other legally prohibited basis in accordance with federal, state and city laws. Read more [here](#).

Pronouns & Preferred Name

Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, including non-binary pronouns. I have asked for preferred names⁵ and pronouns in the introduction form to ensure I use the correct ones for each student (please note: this is entirely optional). I have added my pronouns to my Zoom name. I invite everyone to change their zoom name to their preferred names and pronouns. Preferred names and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom. Mistakes in addressing one another

⁵ CUNYFirst allows everyone to include a preferred name, which will be the name used for you in all official databases (Blackboard, CUNYFirst, library access, class rosters, etc). You can see instructions for how to include a preferred name [here](#).

may happen, so I encourage an environment of openness to correction and learning. I will not however, tolerate repeated comments which disrespect or antagonize students who have indicated pronouns or a chosen name. (Statement adapted from [SUNY Binghamton LGBTQ Center](#))

Support Services

There are supports available at the Graduate Center to assist in your learning. Some of these are for academic support, some are for basic needs support- both types of support are essential to your learning, so please make use of all available supports so you can do your best. **All of the offices/services on campus have remote assistance available.** Many great resources are available [here](#). Some specific offices on campus that may be helpful to you include (but are not limited to):

Basic Needs Supports

it's impossible to do your best learning if your basic needs are not met, so please use these services if they would be helpful (and please share this information with your friends!).

1. **Food Pantry-** (212-817-7400) The GC has its own food pantry in Room 8303. You can see more information [on this page](#).
2. [Additional Food Resources](#)
3. [SNAP Eligibility for CUNY Students](#)

Physical and Mental Health Supports

You cannot learn if you do not feel well, so please prioritize your mental and physical health. Due dates in this class are flexible so you can take the time you need if you are facing mental or physical health challenges, and the offices below may also be helpful:

1. [Student Counseling Center](#) (212-817-7020)
2. **CUNY Crisis Line** Text "CUNY" to 741741 to speak with a compassionate, trained Crisis Counselor. Confidential support 24/7, for free.
3. **Student Health Center's** [list of low and no cost health resources and providers](#)

Academic Supports

I encourage you to seek help with your work early and often, whether you are having trouble in our course or not! The Library, Student Advising Fellow, and IT are here to help. I have used (and continue to use!) many of these resources myself, from online chatting a librarian to aid my research to having IT get me into my email after I lost my password, so please take advantage of them.

1. Digital Humanities Graduate Advising Fellow, Filipa Calado, fcalado@gradcenter.cuny.edu
2. [Mina Rees Library](#)
 - a. [Laptop & Equipment Loans from the Library](#)
3. [Writing Center](#)
4. [IT Website](#)

Zoom

Cameras are to be turned on only when you choose to do so- they are absolutely not required. If you prefer to keep your camera off, I would appreciate you changing your profile image to something you'd like us to associate you with (this could be a photo of you, but could also be a picture of something you like- a landscape, an avatar, a pet, your favorite piece of code,

whatever). You can get instructions for how to change your profile picture [here](#)- again, this is appreciated, but not required. We will develop class [zoom guidelines](#) during the first session.

Zotero

[Zotero](#) is a free, independent, open source tool for managing, reading, and citing a wide variety of sources. We will be using Zotero in our class this semester to read and share materials. Our group library allows collaborative annotation, so if you would like to share thoughts with the class on the documents themselves, you are invited to do so. If you would prefer to keep your annotations private, you may import the library files that are in our Commons library to load into your own Zotero library or your preferred citation management program, or to read the PDFs and access any links directly.

Academic Integrity/AI Policy

In a graduate course, I am not terribly concerned with plagiarism, but as there have been several high profile examples (like [Senator John Walsh](#) and [at least a dozen German government officials](#)), here is the [the full academic integrity policy from the Graduate Center](#) if you'd like to review it. At the risk of being a professor [yelling at kids to get off of my lawn](#), I will ask you all not to use generative AI for your work in this class. Flexible due dates and modified self-grading should hopefully shape the incentive structure away from using AI to do your thinking and writing in the course- you can always have more time if you need it, so you don't have to take that particular shortcut. I know there are other reasons (some of them really interesting and creative and inspiring!) why students might use this tool, and there are a lot of questions (some of which we may address in this class, and [some of which are touched on by some familiar GC faces](#)), so **please do not use AI to generate your work for this class**. I acknowledge this is a rapidly evolving topic and I'm open to conversation and (maybe possibly even evolution?) on this, so please challenge me if it is important to you!

Breaks

2 hours is a long time to Zoom! We will take a 10 minute break in the middle of every class.